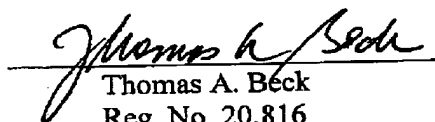


**REMARKS**

In view of the amendment to the specification, issuance of this case is warranted. Such favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Dated: January 29, 2005

  
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I hereby certify that this paper is being telefaxed on the date indicated below to (703) 872-9306 addressed to Commissioner of Patents & Trademarks, Post Office Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Signature:   
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Date: January 29, 2005

## APPENDIX

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Fig. 1 shows an example of how the image is divided into a local region of interest (ROI) and its neighborhood in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 2 shows an example of a flow chart of the sequence of decisions and computations made in halftoning in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 3 gives a detailed description of a priority driven dither computation box in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 4 depicts an example of an initial sequence for printing pels within an ROI based upon a dither matrix;

Fig. 5 depicts the second step in determining the sequence of pixels;

Fig. 6 depicts the final step in determining the sequence of pixels.

### Description of the Invention

Halftone algorithms are either point operations (such as dither) or sequential operations (such as error diffusion. The current invention provides a block-dither method, which involves a limited dependence on the local surround of a pixel. An example embodiment of the present invention examines a digitized document, and decides for each local area (say a 3 x 3 window or even 1 x 2) how much gray the printer needs to put down. This determines the number of pixels to be turned on, based upon a calibration table. Then a decision is made as to how these pixels are distributed spatially.

Consider a case in which M pixels are to be printed In this case M pixels are to be turned "on" with ink. A stack is constructed which is initialized to the position sequence of the gray values in a given 3 x 3 dither matrix. This stack serves to prioritize the different pixels that could be printed in the 3 x 3 window. The gray values in the 3 x 3 window are conditionally sorted, as explained below, and the M black